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ABSTRACT

This study examined the process by which Reform Jewish day schools translate philosophy into curriculum. A Reform day school is defined as a full-time school that encompasses both secular and Jewish studies, extends at least from kindergarten through grade six, and is sponsored by one or more Reform congregations. Seven schools participated. Research methodology included observation, interviews, and the analysis of school documents. By looking at how key actors in the school viewed the curriculum, the researchers developed both a portrait of the schools and their curricula, as well as an explanation of the role values played in the development of that curricula. Case studies of two schools are presented. In order to maintain the anonymity of the schools, composite portraits were drawn based on data from several schools. Two sets of factors were identified as the keys to understanding curriculum processes at these schools: (1) the culture of the school, i.e., its history, the self-perception and self-definition upon which the school operates, the character of the larger institution of which the school is part, and the way in which the school perceives the educational milieu in the surrounding community; and (2) the school's relation to Reform Jewish philosophy and institutions. (RM)

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THE CHALLENGES OF AUTONOMY:

CURRICULAR DECISIONS IN REFORM JEWISH DAY SCHOOLS

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Abstract. Ignoring a century-long tradition of eschewing parochial schools, two Reform Jewish congregations embarked on full-time educational ventures in the fall of 1970. They chose to break with long-standing practice among adherents of the most liberal branch of Judaism, and not to heed the call of the congregational union which had voted less than a year earlier that parochial schools were anathema to Reform Judaism. They have been followed by five other Reform Jewish schools.

This study explores the role values play in the making of curricular decisions in a group of schools which are free from most state regultions and which do not receive assistance from a centralized educational organization. Though the schools are committed to Reform Judaism and its philosophy emphasizing personal autonomy and free choice, each school interprets that commitment differently.

Based two case studies and naturalistic observations in the small group of Reform Jewish day schools, two sets of factors were identified as the keys to understanding curriculum processes at these schools: the culture of the school (its history, the self-perception and self-definition upon which the school operates, the character of the larger institution of which the school is part, and the way in which the school perceives the educational milieu in the surrounding community) and the school's relation to Reform Jewish philosophy and institutions.

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Ignoring a century-long tradition of eschewing parochial schools, two Reform Jewish congregations embarked on full-time educational ventures in the fall of 1970. They chose to break with long-standing practice among adherents of the most liberal branch of Judaism, and not to heed the call of the congregational union which had voted less than a year earlier that parochial schools were anathema to Reform Judaism. Instead they chose to establish all-day schools combining general education with basic schooling in the traditions and values of Judaism.

Following the bold moves of these two pioneering congregations, a handful of other Reform Jewish congregations have established parochial schools. After a decade and a half, the number is still small, and the curriculum in these schools is still fluid. With a two-thousand year tradition of Jewish education to guide them, but only fifteen years of experience in addressing all the educational needs of students in a modern society, these schools face formidible challenges in formulating curricula which respond to the multitude of often-competing demands which are placed upon them.

Along with other private schools in America, these schools enjoy a large measure of autonomy. Free from most state regulations, they can determine their structures, select their personnel, and decide about curriculum solely in accordance with the dictates of their values and the needs and demands of their clientele. The

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autonomy of Reform Jewish day schools is enhanced by the lack of any coordinating body which links them together. Though they share a philosophical outlook on Jewish life and on the relation of Judaism to life in America, each school translates this common outlook into curriculum in a unique way. An understanding of the process by which the Reform Jewish day schools translate philosophy into curriculum is important not only for these schools' self-undertanding; it can also yield important insights into how new schools evolve curriculum in an atmosphere of autonomy. As more private schools are founded by religious and non-religious groups in America, the issues of developing curricula free from external constraints assumes additional importance. It is hoped that this study of a small group of relatively new private religious schools can contribute to such an understanding.

Reform Judaism: Patterned to Fit America

Reform Judaism is the most liberal wing of Judaism and from its earliest days in the mid-19th century its adherents hoped to forge a form of the religion that was suited to the American way of life. In every area of religious life, Reform Jews sought to adapt the laws, customs and practices of their religion to the realities they faced in America. Innovations in the religious service were introduced into order to make worship more appealing to American congregations. Jewish practices and celebrations were adapted in order to reduce the economic and social burden placed upon religious adherents in the American environment. And a modern, democratic spirit - including equaity f the sexes - was grafted onto Jewish world-views in order to keep Judaism in line with the spirit of the age.

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In adapting to American life, the early American Reform Jews sought to integrate themselves into the mainstream of life in the cities in which they lived. Along with other Americans, they strove first and foremost for economic sustenance and success. Along with other Americans, they partook of the art, music and theater whenever their own personal situations, and their locale's, would permit. And along with other Americans, they sent their children to the newly-burgeoning common schools.

Today, Reform Judaism remains one of the three major branches within the American Jewish community. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations, the official constituent body of the movement, counts some 750 congregations and one million individuals among its members. The congregations not only conduct religious services on Sabbaths and Jewish festivals, they also conduct programs ranging from socials to community action projects. The vast majority also sponsor religious schools.

The pattern of schooling available in these congregations has remained essentially stable for generations, with a slight trend in recent decades towards an increased number of hours per week of schooling. In keeping with the view of most Reform Jews, the function of the congregational school is to focus on the development of its students' "Jewish identity," that is, their positive self-identification as Jews. A secondary goal is the teaching of basic functional skills necessary for participation in the communal life of the religious group.

These goals are addressed in a series of classes conducted outside the hours during which public schools function. Following the pattern of Protestant Sunday Schools, most Reform congregations in

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America offer religious classes for children on Sunday mornings, for two to three hours each week. Children begin attending class at the same time they begin Kindergarten in public school. Beginning in fourth or fifth grade, congregations offer additional classes on weekday afternoons, after public school hours. These classes are devoted primarily to instruction in Hebrew language skills, particularly those required for participation in the worship service and in the ceremony of Bar Mitzvah at age 13. After Bar Mitzvah, congregations generally return to one-day-a-week classes focusing on Jewish life and Jewish belief. Reform Jewish education is thus conducted outside the hours of pubic school and addresses goals beyond the realm of public education.

The philosophical commitment of modern Reform Judaism is at the core of the curricula of contemporary Reform religious schools. Reform Judaism maintains commitment to a religious system in which the individual Jew operates within the framework of a covenant with God, yet maintains total personal autonomy(1). The covenantal relationship with God calls upon the Jew to act ethically in his or her relationships with fellow human beings. The partnership between God and the Jews also calls on the individual to maintain a commitment to the continuation of that partnership through the survival of the Jewish people. Ultimately, however, it is the individual who must exercise free will, particularly as it pertains to decisions concerning the dictates of traditional Jewish practice. Each individual is thus called upon to examine the Jewish tradition and to fashion forms of Jewish observance which he or she finds meaningful. Reform Jewish thinking thus represents a dialectic between responsibility to God and one's fellow human beings on the one hand,

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and ultimate personal autonomy on the other.

The goals of Reform Jewish education reflect the dual commitments which grow out of this philosophic position. In a statement of the commitments of Reform Judaism on the hundredth anniversary of its official rabbinic body, the Reform rabbis of North America committed themselves to a philosophy which calls on individual Jews to "confront the tradition, however differently perceived, and to choose and create on the basis of knowledge and commitment"(2). This philosophy guided the Commission on Jewish Education of Reform Judaism when it embarked on a lengthy curriculum development project in the mid-1970s. In describing the ideal products of a Reform Jewish education, the Commission included the following description: "Jews who bear witness to the brit (the covenant between God and the Jewish people) by embracing Torah [divine law] . . . as interpreted in the light of hisotoric development and contemporary liberal thougt."(3) Thus the philosphical commitment to personal autonomy within a religious framework which is the hallmark of Reform Judaism is also at the heart of the educational philosophy of its congregational schools.

Curriculum Inquiry: A Promising Approach

The current study inquires into the unique nature of the curriculum of Reform Jewish day schools. The tradition of curriculum inquiry over the past generation, since the publication of Ralph Tyler's monograph, Basic Principles in Curriculum and Instruction (4), serves as a useful starting point. Much of the research that has been conducted in the area of curriculum in the post-Tylerian era, has assumed that curricular decision-making conforms to the model which Tyler outlined.(5) The research has been designed to elicit

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information relevant to the selection of educational goals and objectives for the school, the development of experiences which the school can offer children in an attempt to reach these goals, the organization of these experiences into effective sequences, and the evaluation of the degree to which the original goals have been achieved.

However, much of the literature which has been published over the past decade and a half questions whether the Tyler rationale is an adequate structure for either or studying curriculum. Joseph Schwab (5), in his ground-breaking work on "The Practical," pointed out that no single over-arching framework is adequate to describe and explain curricular phenomena at all times and in all places. His oft-quoted statement (that it is possible to treat curriculum only as concrete and particular: "this student, in that school, on the South Side of Columbus, with Principal Jones during the present mayoralty of Ed Tweed and in view of the probability of his reelection"(7)) makes it clear that any framework employed in the study of curriculum must be situation-specific.

Following Schwab's lead, Reid(8) has suggested that Tyler's framework is inadequate because its focus is only on "idealized practice." The elements of the Tyler rationale, Reid argues, reflect its author's rationalized prescriptions for how he thinks curriculum problems <u>should</u> be addressed rather than a description of how problems <u>are</u> actually addressed in school systems and in individual schools and classrooms. Reid argues that the elements in Tyler's model simply do not mirror educational practice and, in fact, frequently contradict how people in schools actually behave.

John Goodlad and his associates(9) have also built upon

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Schwab's critique of using the Tyler rationale to guide curriculum research. They point out that curriculum has not one but several meanings. They identify five separate domains of curriculum, all of which must be addressed in order to develop a thorough understanding of curriculum. These domains are: a) the ideal (the curricula that "emerge from ideaistic planning processes"); b) the formal (curricula "which gain official approval by state and local boards and adoption, by choice or fiat, by an institution and/or teachers"); c) the perceived ("what various interested persons and groups perceive in their minds to be the curriculum"); d) the operational ("what goes on hour after hour, day after day in school and classroom"); and e) the experiential ("the one exprienced by students")(10).

Elliot Eisner(11) has also attacked the adequacy of the Tyler approach to understanding curriculum. To adopt the rational and linear perspective of the Tyler model, he argues, is to underestimate the complex interactions that characterize the processes of curriculum. It is to assume that the determination of ends leads automatically to the creation of means. It is to judge the success of a curriculum solely on the degree to which the means have been successful in achieving the previously-identified ends. To adopt the linear model is to miss the possibilities of unintended outcomes, the impact of the "hidden curriculum" and the richness of the symphonic experiences we call teaching and learning.

All of these post-Tylerian approaches to the study of curriculum share two additional featues beyond their criticism of Tyler. First, they all emphasize the value-laden nature of curriculum processes. In contrast to Tyler's technical approach, Schwab, Reid, Goodlad, and Eisner all focus, in one way or another, on the crucial

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role played by values in the processes of curricular decision-making. The process of deliberation which Schwab identifies is informed by the values of the deliberators. The focus on practical problems, on the concrete and particular, on decisions which are not true or false, but only better or worse, on the weighing of alterntives from a variety of perspectives, all suggest that to understand currculum one must understand the role that values play in the making of curricular decisions.

For Reid, curriculum decisions are of necessity value-laden because they are based in theory (which he defines differently than does Schwab). Reid follows Popper in arguing that adjustment to a familiar environment "is the preconscious form of developing a theory; and since any practical problem arises relative to some adjustment of this kind, practical problems are essentially imbued with theories."(12) Reid therefore defines theory as "any modelling of environment or means of anticipating future events whether consciously formulated. . . or un- or pre-conscious and implicit."(13) It is clear that the models which individuals develop are in many ways based on each indivdual's unique set of experences and values. As such, they influence the decisions individuals make in all areas of life, including the decisions they make regarding the curricula they design, implement or evaluate.

Goodlad focuses on the sociopolitical and technical-professional nature of decisions regarding the five levels of curriculum he and his assoiates have identified, and emphasizes the role that personal values play at each level. And Eisner emphasizes the role that individuals' normative theories and aesthetic sensibilities play in influencing the complex matrix of decisions

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involved in planning and teaching a curriculum. No prescriptive rules for curriculum planning are possible, he argues, because the key element in curriculum is always personal judgment.

The second area of agreement among the post-Tylerians is the need for naturalistic inquiry into curriculum. Schwab claims that we need to "know what is and has been going on in . . . schools" and then advocates empirical studies

> not as basis for theoretical concerns about the nature of the teaching or learning process, but as a basis for beginning to know what we are doing, what we are not doing, and to what effect; [and] what changes are needed . . . (14)

Reid extends this line of thinking and proposes a naturalistic approach to curriculum research whose aim is to describe how curriculum decisions are actually made. To this end, curriculum research must focus on "the matching of ideals [desired states] to norms [possible states] [which] lies at the heart of any policy-making activity."(15) Goodlad concurs. "there is nothing more basic," he writes, "than what people practice or do, good or bad, right or wrong."(16) And for Eisner, what "the study of education needs is not a new orthodoxy [of method] but rather a variety of new assumptions and methods that will help us appreciate the richness of educational practice."(17)

In sum, then, the post-Tylerian literature suggests that the approach to curriculum study which may be most fruitful in terms of its possible effects on curriculum theory and curriculum practice, is the development of descriptions of how curriculum decisions are made in specific schools at particular times, and how these decisions affect the lives of students and teachers. The aim of this paper is to provide such a naturalistic description of curriculum decision-making in the small group of Reform day schools.

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The number of Reform day schools is small, thereby affording a unique opportunity to study not just a sample of schools that share certain characteristics, but every school within a population. A Reform day school is defined as a full-time school which encompasses both secular and Jewish studies, extends at least from Kindergarten through grade 6, and is sponsored by one or more Reform temples. (Excluded from the population are schools which meet the other two criteria but which do not extend through grade 6. Several schools include only Kindergarten, or Kindergarten and lower primary grades. While these schools plan to grow by expanding one grade level each year, the future of these schools and the character of their curricula have not yet crystallized. Also not included in the population are schools whose student bodies, faculties, and/or governing boards include significant numbers of Reform Jews but which are not sponsored by Reform temples. Many schools which consider themselves "community schools" -- and even some Conservative and Orthodox day schools -- are populated to some extent by Reform Jews. However, because of the self-definition of these schools and their organizational affiliation, it is not reasonable to include them among the Reform day schools.)

There are currently seven Reform day schools: three in California, two in Florida, and one each in New York and Canada. Three of the schools extend from Kindergarten through grade 6; four extend through grade 8 or 9. (All of the schools are directly connected to nursery or preschool programs; however, the preschools are not the focus of this study.) The enrollment of the schools ranges from 120 to 675. All but one of the schools is directly connected to a single Reform congregation: the other is an independent school which labels itself a Reform day school and whose governing

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board includes representatives of all of the Reform synagogues in the city.

During the 1983-84 school year, each of these schools was studied. One school was the site of an extended participant-observer study. The researcher, serving in the capacity of consultant throughout the school year, had the opportunity to meet with the educational director, the curriculum supervisors, the rabbis, teachers and students, to observe classes and other school activities, and to study the curriculum documents of the school. Other schools were observed intermittently during the school year. The researcher met with principals, supervisors, rabbis, teachers, and students, observed classes, and collected documents for later analysis. Key personnel in schools where on-site visitations were not possible were interviewed and documentation was collected for analysis.

The focus throughout the data gathering phase was on what Goodlad calls the "perceived curriculum." By looking at how key actors in the school view the curriculum, it was possible to develop both a portrait of the schools and their curricula and a picture of the role values played in the development of that curriculum. In order to ascertain the validity of the informants' perceptions, and to check the degree to which their perceptions matched day-to-day reality in the schools, data was collected on "lower" domains of the curriculum (particulary the operational domain) through carefully selected observations throughout the schools. Data on the "higher" domains of curriculum, notably the formal domain, served to claify the official curriculum decisions arrived at by the school community. Areas where the perceived curriculum differed from the formal curriculum became the focus of further inquiry as to how curriculum

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implementation decisions were reached. Throughout, concern with the role of personal and communal values in the making of curriculum decisions was paramount.

The analysis of the data led to the identification of a variety of factors which influence the curriculum decisions made by Reform Jewish day schools. These factors, which will be discussed in detail below, include the culture of the school (its history, the character of the larger institution of which it is part, its self-perception, and how it sees the educational milieu in the surrounding community) and its relation to Reform Jewish philosophy and institutions. While these categories clearly do not exhaust the factors which constitute the complex matrix of influences on curriculum decision-making at the Reform day schools, taken together they indicate the enormous complexity of the decisions these schools reach. What emerges from these descriptions is the importance that institutional and individual autonomy play in many of the curriculum decisions made in the Reform day shools. We will return to this point again. We begin, however, with case studies of two schools.*

The Israel Academy and The Shalom School

As one of the pioneering Reform Jewish day schools, the Israel Academy charted new territory in the field of Reform Jewish education. Located in the heart of a major metropolitan area with a large Jewish population, Temple Israel began to consider the possibility of opening an all-day school in the late 1960s. The neighborhood surrounding the temple was populated by numerous private schools, and most of the members of the Temple sent their children to these schools. After

*In order to maintain the anonymity of the schools, composite portraits have been drawn based on data from several schools.

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several stormy debates, the board of trustees of the temple was pursuaded that opening an all-day private school would attract young families seeking a fine private education for their school-aged children to the temple, thereby bringing much-needed new blood into the temple community.

Today the Israel Academy is housed in a new facility, built by the temple specifically to house the day-school. The facility includes spacious classrooms, a gymnasium, a computer lab, and various art and music workshops. Housed on the Temple property, the school a so has access to the temple playground and to the religious facilities of the temple itself. One-hundred twenty students attend the school in grades kindergarten through six, though expansion through grade eight is under consideration. The teachers are all credentialled by the state, and all but one are Jewish, though not necessarily identifying themselves with Reform Judaism. In addition to the head teacher in each class and an aide in most, there are specialists in physical education, music, art, Hebrew language, Judaica, and special education. The specialists are part-time, with the exception of the latter two who have additional administrative responsibilities. The headmaster is a former publi school principal who also has experience as part-time principal of a Sunday School in another Reform temple in the area.

As the board of trustees of the temple had originally hoped, most of the students in the school are children of young, affluent Jewish families who live in the vicinity of the temple. When choosing a school for their children, the typical family visited several of the private schools in the area. For most, the public schools were never considered a viable option. They chose the Israel Academy because of

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its reputation as a school which pays particular attention to the educational needs of each individual child, and in particular those children who have marginal learning disabilities. The students, therefore, vary widely in terms of academic ability, ranging from learning disabled to gifted.

Many of the families who send their children to the Israel Academy were not previously involved in the Jewish community. Though they identified as Jews, they did not necessarily maintain membership in a temple. The quest for an outstanding secular education motivated them to choose the Israel Academy. The social status that accrues to the family from having their children attend a respected private school also seems to have been a factor for many.

The reaction to the Jewish component of the school's philosophy and curriculum has been mixed during the years since the Israel Academy was established. When it first opened, the school defined itself as "a private school for Jewish children." The first and foremost concern was developing a secular educational program that would establish the school's reputation in a competitive private school market. The quantity and quality of the Jewish educational program were of secondary concern. Only students in the 4th through 6th grades studied Hebrew, and even they studied only two hours each week (approximately the same amount of time as students in the temple's afternoon religious school). Jewish holidays were celebrated alongside American holidays. Teachers at each grade level spent the week before each holiday preparing students for the celebration, but no formal cognitive curriculum on the holidays was developed. No time was set aside in the daily or weekly schedule of each class for the study of Judaica. Jewish concerns were "integrated" into the

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activities of each class at the discretion of the teacher. As a result of an emphasis on teacher autonomy, the amount of explicit Jewish education incorporated into the curriculum was totally dependent on the background and interests of each individual teacher. As the veteran teachers recall, there was constant talk around the school about not incorporating too much Judaica into the program lest the school become "too Jewish." The image of the school, determined by the board, established by the headmaster, followed by the teachers and desired by the parents, was that of a fine private school. That it was housed in a Reform Jewish temple or attended exclusively by Jewish children was almost incidental.

A sense of dissatisfaction on the part of the temple's leadership and the hiring of a new headmaster four years ago led to a shift in the school's self definition and a resultant shift in the school's curriculum. No longer does one hear talk of the Israel Academy being "a private school for Jewish children"; "Jewish day school" is now written all over the school's program and curriculum. Children in grades one through six now study Hebrew language and Judaica every day. Jewish themes are illustrated on the bulletin boards in the halls. Children speak with excited enthusiasm about the Sabbath service which students attend each Friday afternoon. Integration of Judaica into the general curriculum is now more real than illusory. Two examples may clarify the role that Jewish studies now plays in the curriculum that students in the Israel Academy regularly experience.

Twice each week, students meet the Judaica specialist in a room specially designated for that purpose. Pictures of Israel and posters with quotations from Jewish sources in Hebrew and English line

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the walls. As students file in they pick up a copy of the textbook, one that is commonly used in afternoon and Sunday religious schools. Though not published by the official publisher of Reform Jewish textbooks, the book is accepted by Reform Jewish educators as reflecting a non-Orthodox approach to Jewish life. Students actively participate in a discussion of the application of a specific Jewish value derived from sacred Jewish literature to a contemporary situation. The teacher patiently listens to the students' ideas, clearly expressing her own view as well. The discussion conludes without any particular conclusion having been reached; students are left with their own opinions, but with the sense that there is no single "right answer" to the question they have been discussing. At the end, the teacher reviews the quotation that students have been discussing and asks them to repeat it. She then hands out a worksheet that students are to complete for homework and dismisses them to return to their regular classroom.

A second example is taken from the second grade class. The class is studying the local community as part of its social studies curriculum. They have visited various local sites, including the fire station, a nearby factory, and one of the ethnic neighborhoods. As preparation for a trip to a street which houses several Jewish shops (kosher butcher, Jewish bakery, Judaica book store, etc.), they are preparing a puppet show that they will perform for the entire school at Friday's Sabbath service. As part of their art program, they have made puppets from paper bags. As part of their language arts program, they have written the script. As part of their social studies program, they have discussed the places they will visit and the types of people they might meet. As they rehearse, the teacher reminds them

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that when they actually visit the Jewish neighborhood, they will have a chance to compare their ideas with what actually happens, just as they did before and after each of their other field trips.

The Shalom School provides a sharp contrast to the Israel Acedmy. Though it too is located in a large metropolitan area with a large Jewish population, the local community has no history of sending children to private schools. Most middle class parents, and in particular middle class Jewish parents, have traditionally used the reputation of the local public schools as one of the main criteria in buying or renting housing. The mid-70s crisis in public education began to change all that as middle class families searched for alternatives to the public schools. Statistics from the local public school district show a steady decline in the Anglo population of the school district beginning in 1966, accelerating steadily throughout the 1970s and continuing into the 1980s.

Temple Shalom had a long tradition of offering a variegated program of Jewish education even before its day school opened. While most Reform temples offered two to four hours per week of Hebrew and religious instruction, Temple Shalom had offered six hour a week programs to children as young as 7 years old. For over a decade, Temple Shalom had sponsored a nursery school program that served over 150 children. In the early 1970s, the nursery school exapanded to include a Kindergarten, with the hope that some day a full day school might grow out of the Kindergarten, by adding one grade a year. As the trickle of middle class famlies away from the public schools turned nto a steady stream, parents began to ask the Temple to expand more quickly. The school grew almost overnight to grade 6, and today over 675 students attend te Shalom School in grades Kindergarten

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through 8.

The school is housed in the classrooms of Temple Shalom, most of which were originally designed for the afternoon and weekend religous school. Students have access to the playgrounds and religious facilities at the temple, as well as a cafeteria set up each day in the temple's social hall, an art workshop, a computer lab and a well-stocked children's library. The teachers are all credentialled, either by the state or by the local Bureau of Jewish Education. In the primary grades, two teachers, a "general studies"* teacher and a Hebrew teacher, are in the classroom all day. A Hebrew teacher comes into each intermediate grade classroom each day for an hour and a half, while the general studies teacher and an aide are present all day. The upper grades are departmentalized; students take Hebrew and Judaica as two of their classes. Specialists handle physical education, music, art, and library. In addition to the headmaster, a former public school teacher, the administative staff includes three supervisors, one each for general studies, Hebrew and Judaica.

While the initial group of parents may have clamored for the temple to start a day school so that they could transfer their children from the public schools, by all accounts the current parent body and the current community climate have changed. Public school, particularly at the elementary level, does not seem to be an option that most middle class Jewish parents seriously consider. Parents often enroll their children in Temple Shalom's nursery school because of its reputation in the community as a warm, loving, and safe environment for children, and then are satisfied with the school and

*The term "general studies" is used for all parts of the curriculum other than Hebrew and Jewish studies.

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keep their children in once they reach grade-school age. Administrators, teachers, and the synagogue community are all convinced that the prime concern of parents with children in the school is that they receive a "quality secular education." While Hebrew language and Jewish studies are not prime motivators, parents see them as "icing on the cake." (For a minority of parents, the Jewish component does seem to be the key motivating factor. This group includes a significant number of Jewish immigrants to the United States, from the Soviet Union, Mexico, and Iran.)

The tension between the need to provide the highest quality secular education that the school can provide, and the desire to provide a well-grounded Jewish education surfaces constantly. Teachers feel the pressure of time, especially around the time of Jewish holidays. Considerable time and effort is devoted to teaching about the holidays, their histories, how they are celebrated, the values that they represent, and the sacred texts that are associated with them; little time is left during the day for the on-going curriculum in other areas. The administration feels under pressure from all sides: The rabbis are concerned that certain key elements of the Jewish tradition never appear in the curriculum; parents want to be sure that their chidren are not "missing anything" that they would get in another private school; and teachers feel they can't do it all, in the allotted time. It falls to the administration to juggle the competing demands and placate the competing parties.

The Jewish education component of the curriculum falls into three categories: Hebrew language, Judaica, and integrated studies. Each child in the school studies Hebrew for one-and-a-half hours each day, with the focus being on spoken Hebrew rather than on the reading

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of sacred texts. The Judaica program focuses primarily on the Jewish holidays. The school proudly displays a wall chart illustrating the "spiraling" of the holiday curriculum. At each grade level, each holiday is studied from a different vantage point. In the younger grades, the emphasis is on modes of celebration, while in the upper grades, a theme or a value serves as the focal point of teaching about the holidays. While these focal points do inform the classroom experiences of children differently at each grade level, the similarities from grade to grade overwhelm the differences. Each year children learn the story behind each holiday, learn about the religious symbols connected with each holiday, learn key prayers and blessings connected with each holiday, and learn how each holiday is celebrated in synagogue and at home. In order to insure that teachers are accountable to the formal curriculum, a standard test is administered to children at each grade level just before each holiday. The test is prepared and graded by the Judaica supervisor. Teachers and administrators are all aware that the purpose of the test is to assess the curriculum and the teacher, not the students. While the administration tries to encourage the independence and creativity of each teacher, accountability to the formal curriculum comes first.

The integration of Judaica into the general studies curriculum is a key feature upon which the school prides itself. The teachers work in teams;the general studies teachers at each grade level meeting regularly with the Judaica supervisor. The purpose of these team meetings is to look ahead at the curriculum for the coming weeks in the areas of social studies and language arts in order to decide where and how it may be appropriate to bring Jewish themes, Jewish values or Jewish concepts into the general studies curriculum. Teachers are

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asked to be accountable to the team for implementing the teams' plans in their own classrooms, but it is clear that the degree to which the plans are actually implemented in the classroom varies depending on the individual teacher's interest and willingness. Two illustrations show how Jewish concerns are incorporated into the daily patterns at the Shalom School.

The fourth grade classes are studying the history of the Western United States. Earlier in the year, the team had met to discuss how to integrate Judaica into the curriculum. The supervisor had pointed out that before the Gold Rush, few Jews had settled west of the Rockies. The teachers agreed that later in the year it would be possible to incorporate the histories of pioneer Jewish communities into the unit dealing with white people settling the west. But the teachers and the supervisor were not satisfied. After long discussions and careful study of the curriculum, the team decided that integrating by discussing parallel developments in the general and Jewish communities was not the way to approach the fourth grade social studies curriculum. Instead, they decided on an cross-cultural, anthropological approach. They isolated aspects of the culture of the American Indians they would be studying and to plan a curriculum which juxtaposed elements of Indian culture with elements of Jewish culture. The suprvisor assumed responsibility for preparing classroom materials on Jewish culture and one of the teachers agreed to do the same for Indian culture. In the classroom, students have compared and contrasted various indian myths of creation with the Biblical account. They are now looking at Indian rites of passage and discussing how they compare with the traditional Jewish ceremony of Bar Mitzvah. As the disussion winds down, the teacher asks each student to think abuot

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what an Indian child of thirteen might have felt and thougth about just before his rite of passage ceremony. At the conclusion of the discussion, she announces that tomorrow several of the eighth graders will be coming to visit to talk about their own Bar and Bat Mitzvah with the class.

A school-wide program illustrates an attempt to design programs which embody the principles of Reform Judaism. Each Friday afternoon, an all-school service welcomes in the Jewish Sabbath, which begins Friday at sundown. The Judaica supervisor, after attending services week in and week out, was struck by the fact that not one single child was wearing a kipa (a skullcap traditionally worn by Jewish men, especially during worship). The supervisor brought this observation to the attention of the principal and one of the temple's rabbis. Together, they decided to invite the children and teachers to participate in an experiment. During the week, the rabbi visited each and every clasroom in the school. He explained to the children what a kipa is and why many Jews wear a kipa. He then gave each child a kipa, which the child was to keep in a special place and was to wear to services that Friday. As the children enter services, each one (boy and girl!) puts on a white kipa, some plain, some hand-decorated by the children. The synagogue looks like a field of wheat whose white stalks sway proudly in the breeze. When the rabbi ascends the podium, he compliments the children on remembering to wear their kipot (plural for kipa). He reviews with them what a kipa is, and asks several volunteers to share how they feel wearing kipot. At the conclusion of the service, he explains that from now on each child can choose - to wear or not to wear a kipa; it is a matter for each child to decide by himself or herself.

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School Culture and the Curriculum

Many of the factors which affect the curriculum in the Israel Academy, the Shalom School and the other Reform day schools can be considered part of the culture of the individual schools. Each school has its own culture which is, in turn, the product of a broad matrix of factors, among the most powerful of which are: the historical development of the school, the self-perception and self-definition upon which the school operates, the character of the larger institution of which the school is part, the way in which the school perceives the educational milieu in the surrounding community.

The original reasons for the schools' founding were varied and complex. While the debates on the desirability of Reform day schools centered on the need for an intensive form of Jewish education under Reform auspices, it is clear that other factors played an important role in the establishment of the schools.(18) While determining the causes of an event is always tricky, among the reasons that those involved in the Reform day schools give to explain the establishment of their schools are: the the desire to provide an intensive form of Jewish education as an alternative to afternoon and Sunday classes, the desire on the part of some members of the community for a high quality private school, the desire on the part of some parents to escape racial tension and violence in the public schools, a desire to attract young families to the synagogue by providing an attractive educational program for their children, the fulfillment of a personal vision of one or more leaders in the community.

It is interesting to note that of the five schools founded in the 1970's, only one is still served by its first principal. The

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changes in leadership are more than symbolic. As in the case of the Shalom School, the educational leadership provided by the director or headmaster is crucial in determining the course of the curriculum. The principal is the one who has the greatest impact on the educational philosophy of the school, on the textbooks adopted (and, in fact, on how extensively, if at all, textbooks will be used), on other materials and resources made available to teachers, etc. A change in leadership therefore brings with it significant changes in the options available to teachers and in the degree of freedom the are given in exercising those options. The curriculum which is operationalized in the classroom may change only slowly after a new director assumes the leadership of the school, but changes in the daily experiences of children inevitably follow. Among the most significant and immediate impacts of a new principal is a change in the way the school perceives its mission, that is, the school's self-definition.

It should be mentioned at the outset that it is somewhat misleading to speak of a schools' self-definition; schools do not define themselves, people define them. Obviously, therefore, the definitions that different individuals hold of a school will not always be in total accord. While the professional leadership of a school may share a common vision (or visions which are highly congruent), others may share in this vision only to a limited extent. Parents and students, for example, may hold to a view of the school that is not in complete harmony with the view held by the school's leaders. Depending on how dissonant the different groups' views are, and depending on how vocal parents and students are in expressing their views, curriculum decisions may be affected. Since all of the

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Jewish day schools in North America operate under a "free market system," parents are free to withdraw their children from the schools at any time. The schools must therefore be aware of parents' and students' perceptions and must engage in a process of negotiating perceptions. This process of negotiation is rarely, if ever, overt; yet the school's perception of how parents define the task of the school weighs heavily in decisions-making. In the early development of the Israel Academy, for example, decisions about the extensiveness of the Jewish education component of the curriculum were clearly made out of the fear that if the school's curriculum and the parent's perceptions of the school became too dissonant, parents would begin looking for other schools for their children.

The key link between the headmaster and the teachers, especially in terms of operationalizing the school's self-definition in the classroom, are the curriculum supervisors. In addition to the headmaster, all of the schools employ at least two supervisors, one in the area of secular studies and one in the area of Judaica and Hebrew. Other than the classroom teachers, it is these individuals who most directly affect the curriculum which is operationalized in the classroom. The Judaic studies supervisors meet with teachers (some on a regular basis, others sporadically) in order to develop curriculum. With Judaica and Hebrew teachers, they set goals, develop units, plan activities, and create classroom learning materials. With general studies teachers, they focus on plans for integrating Jewish themes and concepts into the general studies curriculum, and on the teaching of holidays. The supervisors also observe classes and maintain on-going communication with the teachers regarding curriculum matters. The Judaica supervisors express both excitement and frustration over

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their roles in affecting the curriculum. They are excited at the challenges set before them in terms of developing a day school curriculum that is uniquely Reform in its character, and explain with a great deal of pride what they considered to be examples of success, ranging from samples of written curriculum to descriptions of specific in-class projects. The frustrations they describe stem from two sources: 1) They frequently have to struggle for more time in the curriculum of the school to address Judaic issues in the classroom. The schools' schedules are packed, and the competition for time by various priorities is often fierce. Sometimes, the goals which the Judaica supervisors set are unrealizable in the amount of time allotted to Judaica. 2) The supervisors expressed a sense of professional isolation. They are the only ones in the schools--and often the only ones in the city--who occupy their positions and who have the responsibilities they have. As a result, they have no reference group with whom to share ideas or from whom to seek support. In addition, only one of the Judaica supervisors has ever visited another Reform day schcol or talked to people involved in Judaic curriculum at another Reform day school.

Teachers, too, must participate in defining the mission of the Reform day school in which they teach. The teachers at the Shalom School express basic agreement with the schools' leadership in defining the school as a Jewish day school whose task is to provide both a quality secular education and an intensive Jewish education. The question most frequently raised by teachers, however, revolves around the definition of the school as a Reform day school. Many teachers are either unsure as to what the notion of Reform Judaism implies for the curriculum of the school or unclear as to why the

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school does not define itself merely as a Jewish day school, without the additional modifier, "Reform." Since teachers are the primary curriculum decision-makers(19), if they only partially understand and accept the administation's definition of the school, it is unlikely that the curriculum operationalized in the classroom will match the formal curriculum, no matter how tight the controls placed on teachers are. The Jewish component of the Shalom School may be evident in every classroom in the school, but content or experiences that reflect the Reform philosophy are evident primarily in school-wide experiences (assemblies, religious services, etc.) rather than in individual classrooms.

One part of the schools' self-definition about which there is universal agreement is the importance of integrating Jewish and general studies in the curriculum. One of the highest priorities of the individuals who work in Reform day schools is to help children adjust to their dual heritage as Jews and as Americans or Canadians. The brochure of the Israel Academy is typical of the day schools' public postures. It begins, "The Israel Academy's unique philosphy, program, and approach to educating the Jewish child involves the maximum interweaving of Jewish and secular studies. Our integrated curriculum combines the best we can learn from our secular culture with the rich traditions of our Jewish heritage tempered by liberal interpretation. The entire school atmosphere is infused with a vibrant sense of Jewishness." When administrators and teachers talk about what makes the Israel Academy unique among private schools and even among Jewish day schools, they talk first and foremost about the integrated curriculum.

The term integration, however, has many meanings. Integration

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may refer to the fact that Jewish and general studies are not segregated and assigned to different parts of the day; it may mean that an occasional Jewish reference enters into discussions about other subjects in the curriculum; it may mean that the general studies teacher teaches certain aspects of the Judaic curriculum, or it may mean that the distinction between Jewish and so-called secular subjects is blurred almost to the point of extinction.(20)

Each of the Reform day schools interprets the notion of integration differently. In the Shalom School, a general studies teacher and a Judaica/Hebrew teacher, are in the class throughout the day. During times devoted to general studies, the general studies teacher serves as the head teacher and the Judaica teacher serves as the aide. During Judaica periods, the roles are reversed. This organizational set-up allows for general and Jewish concerns to be intertwined throughout the day, regardless of the focal topic at a given moment. In one of the other Reform day schools, open classrooms predominate. The learning opportunities made available to students in each classroom throughout each day include both secular and Judaic subject matter and both a general studies and a Judaica/Hebrew teacher are available to work with students at any time during the day.

Beyond the organization of the classroom, the most common approach to integrating the curriculum at the Reform day schools is through specific lessons which are integrated. The integration may be divided into three types, integration based on subject matter, integration based on conceptual themes, or integration of examples. Integration based on subject matter takes place when Jewish content is juxtaposed to related secular content, as when the history of the Jews in America is included in a unit on American history. Conceptual

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integration takes place when a theme is studied through the exploration of related concepts in Jewish and general culture, as when the themes of freedom in the American and Jewish experience are studied side by side. Integration of examples takes place when a Jewish example is used to teach a skill in a secular subject area, as when students are asked to punctuate a story about a Jewish holiday or to count candles on a Hanukkah lamp. It is interesting to note that almost all attempts at integration are focused on the similarities between Jewish and American or Canadian culture. The notion of preparing a child to live with his/her dual heritage is interpreted to imply demonstrating to the child that the two cultures are compatible. It was impossible to locate a single example of a lesson, a curricular unit, a worksheet, or an activity that focused on contrasts between Jewish values and American/Canadian values.

All three types of integration seem to be utilized in all of the day schools, though the frequency of the various types is different in every setting. In fact, there is little uniformity from school to school, or even from classroom to classroom within a school, as to when and how much integration is done. The schools' concern with and commitment to integration as a concept is clear to the teachers. Yet for the most part, the decision as to when and how often to integrate is left up to the teacher. In the Shalom School, one of the curriculum supervisors is assigned responsibility for monitoring the integration of the curriculum, in particular in conjunction with social studies, but in the Israel Academy, each teacher is left to decide independently when and how often to integrate.

A significant factor affecting the degree to which integration

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takes place is the existence of a written curriculum in which opportunities for integration are identified and spelled out for the teachers. All the schools have written documents describing their curricula, yet the degree of specificity of these documents varies widely, from a single-page fold-out chart, to a several paragraph per grade description, to a multi-volume, grade-by-grade, subject-by-subject curriculum guide. While even in the schools with more explicit written curricula it is difficult to ascertain the degree to which the operational curriculum (as opposed to the formal curriculum) of each classroom in the school is integrated, it is clear that in those schools in which the written curriculum is less explicit, it is more difficult to locate instances of integration. (That is not to say that less integraton takes place in these schools but rather that neither the supervisors nor the principal nor an outside observer could readily find instances of integration in the classroom.)

Another factor which leaves its mark on the curriculum, both formal and operational, is the character of the temple of which the school is a part, that is, the immediate cultural context in which the school operates. The temple's approach to ritual, to prayer, to Hebrew language, and to the State of Israel all inform the curricular decisions the school makes on these issues. At Temple Israel, for example, the synagogue services are conducted mostly in English and the congregation does not evidence a strong commitment to the use of Hebrew language in any part of its activities or educational programs. As a result, Hebrew language instruction plays only a minor role in the day school's curriculum. Two Hebrew specialists serve the entire school and teach Hebrew to all the classes twice each week. In

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contrast, Temple Shalom evidences a strong commitment to Hebrew language and to Israel throughout its programs. The synagogue service is conducted largely in Hebrew, the congreation's afternoon religious school has a long tradition of emphasizing Hebrew language instruction in its curriculum, and the congregation has a large chapter of ARZA (the Zionist organization of the Reform movement). Students in the Shalom School study Hebrew language (apart from Judaica, holidays, etc.) one and a half hours each day.

While the synagogue milieu leaves its mark on the day school, so too does the educational milieu of the larger community. The Israel Academy is located in a community with a long tradition of private schooling. Among the neighboring private schools are several with reputations for being among the finest private schools in the country. These private schools serve affluent populations who are highly concerned with their children's achievement and with the social status that accrues to the family as a result of the child's private schooling. The headmaster reports that the school must therefore strive to match the quality of education offered in these other private schools. In many cases, children apply to several of the private schools and only make a decision after visiting them. The educational environment as perceived by the headmaster influences the secular studies program of the school dramatically, for not only does the school strive to model itself on the academic program of the neighboring private schools; it also seeks to match their enrichment programs with offerings ranging computer science, to woodworking, to week-long trips to national and state parks. One of the key measures of the success of a school in this environment is the quality of the prep schools into which its graduates are accepted. As with any

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school concerned with admissions standards to the next rung on the educational ladder, the headmaster of the Israel Academy keeps an eye on the next level's admissions standards when making curricular decisions.

In another community in which a Reform day school is located, Jewish day schools abound. The Jewish community has a long tradition of sending its children to Jewish day schools, and the Reform day school is one of the newer entries onto the scene. Though the majority of Jewish families send their children to public schools, those who send their children to Jewish day schools during the elementary years frequently plan to have them continue into high school. The Reform day school covers only the elementary grades, and as with the Israel Academy, the admissions standards of the high schools influence the decisions at the elementary level. In this case, however, since the schools in which the students continue are Jewish schools, it is the Judaic curriculum which is influenced most directly. In order to enable graduates of the school to study Bible on an equal footing with graduates from other Jewish day schools when they reach high school, the study of Bible in the Reform day school exactly parallels the Bible curriculum in the other Jewish day schools in the city, even though this means that a Reform outlook is often ignored.

What Makes a Reform Jewish Day School Distinctively Reform?

An identity crisis of sorts prevails in all the Reform Jewish day schools. While the schools have firmly established a sense of identity as a Jewish day school and have translated that sense of identity into curriculum in one way or another, they still struggle

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with the question of what makes them Reform . This concern is not new. At a meeting of day school directors held in 1976, one of the major issues raised was the development of "a Reform day school curriculum." As one rabbis put it, a "Reform day school curriculum is not simply a matter of a [Sunday] school curriculum wih more time. It requires a fresh look." The problem first articulated almost a decade ago remains unsolved.

The Israel Academy has begun a curriculum development project in order to revise the Judaica program of the school and to develop a curriculum that responds to the unique philosophy of Reform Judaism and to the unique challenges offered by a full-time educational seting. In order to determine the goals for this new curriculum, a curriculum committee was assembled to study the Centennary Perspective, the most recent "positio paper" issued by the Reform rabbinical association. The committee is currently seeking to determine what goals an educational program built on the Centennary Perspective might seek to attain. Based on this list of goals, they intend to determine what the most appropriate subject matters for study are, and then to proceed from there to determine the nature of the course of study in each of those subject matters. Whether this effort is fruitful or not remains to be seen, but it does represent an attempt to draw curricular implications directly from the philosphical stance of Reform Judiasm for an educational setting that is less limited in terms of hours of study than are afternoon and Sunday schools. It also remains to be seen whether the ideal curriculum that emerges from this process can be translated successfully into other domains of curriculum.

The current Judaica curriculum at the Reform day schools is

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only loosely based on the philosophical stance of Reform Judaism. For example, a major component of the Judaica curriculum at all of the schools revolves around the Jewish holidays. Each holiday is taught at each grade level of each school. While the approach changes from school to school, and even from classroom to classroom, in every case the approach to the holidays might be termed "Reform" in the sense that the call to celebrate does not emerge from a set of binding laws but rather from a tradition nurtured by God but developed by human beings. For example, the specific form of holiday observances which are taught conform not to strict Jewish law but rather to the norm of the individual synagogue. Similarly, what is taught about prayer, about the State of Israel, about our obligations to our fellow human beings, etc., all reflect the norms of the individual synagogue.

It is in areas of the Judaica curriculum beyond holiday observances and prayer that the issue of what is appropriate for a Reform day school curriculum becomes most acute. The types of questions confronting the day schools directly have only been confronted in theory by Reform Jewish educators in the past. The availability of significantly more time to devote to Jewish studies makes possible the striving towards goals which could not be considered attainable by Sunday schools. But since there is no history of confronting these questions through actual curricular decisions in Reform circles outside a seminary setting, these questions are particularly troublesome. For example, one of the issues which some of the schools have confronted is: What should be the role of Jewish source texts in the curriculum? Currently, one of the schools teaches the Bible in its original Hebrew; the others teach Bible stories. But even in the school that has chosen to teach the

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Bible in the original, the approach to the Biblical text is not at all clear. The school has not clearly articulated its philosophical position, beyond the notions that the Bible is not divinely authored, but that it is the repository of Jewish values and the early history of the Jewish people. Yet the goals of the Bible curriculum are unclear and the basis on which selections of which texts will be studied are not consistent. Each teacher is left to make decisions regarding how he or she will teach Bible. Since all of the teachers are Israelis who have had little exposure to Reform Judaism, it is unlikely that the decisions they make regarding the curricula they teach will be infused with Reform perspectives.

Only one of the schools teaches Mishna (a part of the Talmud which is more accessible to novices than the Talmud itself), and at that school a published textbook is used rather than an English translation of the original text. The perspective on the text is that it is a non-authoratative part of our people's past and that an understanding of the Jewish heritage must include at least a minimal exploration into this genre of literature. While the formal curriculum for this course seems to be a genuine expression of Reform values, the teachers and the rabbi complain that the experienced curriculum, from the students' point of view, is far removed from their existential situations. The students, it seems, see this literature as boring and irrelevant, and, in the words of one teacher, seem to be learning that Jewish texts are merely a relic of a dead culture. The dilemma is how to authentically reflect a Reform perspective on the text while providing students the opportunity to experience the text as a vital and vibrant part of the Jewish tradition.

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While the curricula at Reform day schools reflect the values and forms of observance of the Reform Synagogue of which they are part, they do not represent any input from the official bodies of Reform Judaism in North America. The Union of American Hebrew Congregations (UAHC), the congregational union representing Reform temples and their members, has responsibility for providing coordinating services, textbooks and materials, curriculum, and accreditation to the educational programs in Reform temples. To date, however, the UAHC has not provided any of these services to Reform day schools. To understand the reason for this, it is necessary to look to the recent history of the issue of full-time education in Reform Judaism.

In 1969, the issue of full-time Reform Jewish education became one of the central questions in Reform Judaism. As the issue percolated in Reform circles, Dimensions in American Judaism , an official publication of the UAHC, carried a debate in its summer edition stating "The Case For and Against a Reform Jewish Day School." By the time of the fall meetings of the Commission on Jewish Education, a joint lay-rabbinic body, the issues which had previously been debated primarily amng provessionals, were clear, well-publicized, and emotionally charged. The Commission debated the issues at length and finally voted to reverse its earlier opposition to Reform day schools by passing a historic resolution which said in part:

> No charge upon Reform Judaism is more compelling than the need to intensify Jewish education; the Reform Movement has consistently sought to raise the educational standards of both students and teachers and to increase the quantity and quality of our educational programs. In recent years there has been a growing desire within our ranks to experiment with the creation of full-time Reform Jewish schools for the memebers

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> of our Movement who are seeking a more intensive study of Judaism than the part-time school can possibly provide. The Commission on Jewish Education, therefore, encourages the establishment of pilot programs and experimental projects in full-time Reform Jewish education. . . .
>
> Full-time education within the Reform Movement will not be subject to a central authority with binding powers. Our primary purpose is to be of assistance to those parents who choose full-time Reform Jewish education for their children -- not to establish a parochial hierarchy alien to the principles of Reform Judaism and its national institutions.
>
> The Commission on Jewish Education therefore recommends that the UAHC Department of Education be authorized to encourage the establishment of pilot programs and experimental projects in full-time Reform Jewish education . . . (21)

It is important to note several features of the resolution passed by the Commission. First, it authorized no expenditures on the part of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. Second, it did not call for the establishment of a series of day schools within the Reform movement, but only for "pilot programs and experimental projects." And third, the resolution stated clearly that any schools which might be established were to be totally independent and not subject to any central authority.

The Commission decided to bring this resolution before the UAHC Bienniel convention, whose delegates represent all Reform congregations in North America, later during the fall of 1969. The delegates debated heatedly and then defeated the resolution, "but not by an overwhelming margin. . . . The Commission on Education was still free to pursue its plan. It could not do so, however, with official Movement sanction."(22)

Two years later, the UAHC Bienneial delegates did pass a resolution on full-time Jewish education. This resolution, however, did not address the question of day schools directly, but rather

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called on the UAHC to "proceed . . . to stimulate the creation of a privately financed Reform Jewish Academy on the high school level."(23) To date, this is the only stand which the Reform movement as a whole has taken in favor of any form of full-time Jewish education.

The most recent chapter in the debate over the relationship between the Union of American Hebrew Congregations and the Reform day schools took place in the fall of 1983. One of the congregations which sponsors a day school drafted a resolution expressing the commitment of the movement to the concept of day schools as an alternative form of Jewish education which the movement's congregations might provide if they choose to. The resolution did not call for any expenditure of funds or active support on the part of the UAHC. However, the resolution was not passed by either the Commission on Jewish Education nor by the Bienniel convention whose delegates represent all of the Reform congregations in North America.

The current status thus remains: While the Commission on Jewish Education has taken a stance in favor of pilot projects in full-time education, Reform Judaism as a whole has not and to this day still does not endorse the idea of Reform day schools.

However, resolutions of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations are not binding on member congregations; each congregation is free to act independently. Thus despite the defeat of the day school resolution in 1969, the first two Reform day schools opened their doors in September of 1970. The resolutions do, however, affect the functioning of the UAHC itself, and it is this fact that has had the most significant and far-reaching effects - by default: The UAHC provides neither curricula, nor curricular materials, nor any

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form of curricular support or guidance to the day schools.

In contrast, the UAHC is currentiy engaged in a 10-year process of constructing "Curriculum Guidelines" for Reform Jewish afternoon and Sunday schools. To date, the guidelines for preschool, primary, intermediate and junior high grades have been published(24). While the Guidelines claim to be appropriate for use in any educational setting within the Reform movement, none of the day schools have been able to adapt the Guidlines. With their heavy emphasis on the affective domain, and with their lack of sequencing, they tend not to be appropriate to intensive and extensive, academically-oriented programs.

Another potential function of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations beyond the production or distribution of day school curriculum materials would be the facilitation of communication among the Reform day schools. In fact, a meeting was conducted by the Commission on Jewish Education in 1976. At that meeting, attended by rabbis and principals from the five Reform day schools then in existence (one of which no longer identifies itself as Reform) and by representatives of the UAHC and the Commission on Jewish Education, ideas about curriculum (as well as concerns ranging from recruitment of students and teachers to tuition and other sources of funding) were exchanged. Most of the individuals in attendance at that meetng are no longer involved with Reform day schools. The current principals of the Reform day schools have never met together, and the UAHC has taken no further steps to facilitate the form of "networking" among the day schools that might affect curricular decisions.

In sum, the Reform movement's stance towards day schools - tolerance of their existence but no official sanction - remains

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unchanged since 1969. The result is that the Reform day schools independently work on building their curricula without input from the official bodies of Reform Judaism and without the benefit of an exchange of ideas among themselves. Being a Reform day school thus does not mean that the school's curriculum reflects Reform Judaism as a movement.

Implications

For the seven Reform day schools in North America, autonomy is a double-edged sword. The school leaders and the communities they serve all prize the independence of the schools. They are not bound by an abundance of state-imposed mandates and are free to determine their own philosophies, their own structures, and their own curricula. The school programs can therefore be designed to meet the specific needs of the local community which the school serves.

But atonomy and independence also carry in their wake a sense of isolation. Each school must determine its priorities, develop plans for converting those priorities into educational programs which affect the lives of children, and create learning materials to implement those plans without guidance from a central organization and without contact with one another. The educational leadership at each and every school has expressed the frustration that the schools are each struggling to "invent the same wheel" over and over again.

The problem of establishing a school's self-definition emerges as the most important issue facing these schools - and by extension, other new schools operating in an atmosphere of autonomy. How key people in the school view the mission and character of the school directly affects curriculum decisions in all the domains of

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curriculum. As new private schools open, be they Reform Jewish day schools or other private schools, the attention they pay to defining their purpose and translating that purpose into curriulum assumes paramount importance. Perhaps this is even more true for a school which espouses a philosophy which emphasizes personal autonomy, as do the Reform Jewish day schools. Clearly, these issues require further study.

The challenge facing Reform Jewish day schools as they grow and develop in the decade to come, and the challenge which will face new Reform day schools as they struggle to become established, is how to maximize the positive ramifications of autonomy while minimizing its deleterious effects. Part of the answer may lie in addessing the isolation in which the Reform day schools operate. The most effective way to end this isolation would be through the existing oranizational structures of the Union of American Hebrew Congregations. However, given the movement's failure to endorse the idea of Reform day schooling, it is unlikely that the day schools will be able to turn to the UAHC in the near future. It therefore falls to the schools themselves to initiate the contact among themselves and to address their isolation informally, without official sanction from the movement with which they identify.

While clearly the agenda for interchange among schools must be determined by the representatives of the schools themselves, several issues have emerged from this survey of the current status of Reform day schools that may have fruitful consequences in terms of future directions of curriculum building. First, the schools must address what it means to be a "Reform day school" beyond the formal association with Reform temples. In particular, there is a need to

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discover what factors uniquely characterize a school with a liberal Jewish philosophy which is not constrained by a school program limited to six hours per week or less. This involves the evolution of a philosophy of Reform Jewish education, reflective of the Centennary Perspective, but flexible enough to be adapted to the pluralistic philsophies which characterize Reform synagogues. It also involves the elaboration of the sociological, psychological and cultural constraints under which Reform day schools operate. The mediation bewteen the ideal of the philosophy of Reform Jewish education, and the realities of the communities which the schools serve, can provide a fertile foundation for the synthesis of curriculum.

A process of exchange aimed at ending the isolation of Reform day schools might focus specifically on the role of individual autonomy within a Reform day school. In addressing not only questions of philosophy of Judaism, but also philosophy of education in general, the schools might be able to gain insight into how to use the "hidden curriculum" inherent in school organization, school policies, and school climate to enhance each individual's personal autonomy.

Finally, the frustration that results from the isolation of the schools, and in particular of the supervisors and teachers in the schools, can be addressed through the exchange and even joint production of curricular materials. Since the enrollment in these schools is too small to warrant a commercial publisher producing materials specifically designed for Reform day schools, it will fall to the schools themselves to either adapt existing curriculum materials or to produce their own. By working on projects together, or by sharing the results of their independent work, the schools can begin to accumulate a reservoir of curriulum materials. It is only by

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such cumulative efforts, in the area of religious and educational philosophy, in the area of curriculum development, and in the area of the production of materials, that the schools achieve the aspiration which they all share - providing a quality educational program that combines the best secular education possible with an intensive Jewish education that reflects the values of Reform Judaism.

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6. J.J. Schwab, "The Practical".

7. ibid, p. 289.

8. Reid, op cit.

9. J.I. Goodlad et al Curriculum Inquiry (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1979).

10. ibid, pp. 60-63.

11. E.W. Eisner, The Educational Imagination (New York: MacMillan, 1979).

12. Reid, p. 21.

13. ibid.

14. Schwab, p. 313.

15. Reid, p. 35.

16. Goodlad, p. 46.

17. Eisner, p. 19.

18. For further elaboration see M. Zeldin, "Change in Jewish Education."

19. See, for example, Eisner.

20. For further discussion of integration in Jewish day schools, see the symposium in the Fall 1979 issue of Jewish Education .

21. Policy Handbook , p. 22-23.

22. D.B. Syme, "Reform Judasim and the Day School," p.176.

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23. Policy Handbook , p. 2.

24. To See The World Through Jewish Eyes .

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